

CONGRESS SHOULD REJECT DEMOCRATIC PLAN ON IRAQ

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, in January, President Bush described his plan to win the war in Iraq, and last week Speaker PELOSI described her plan to end the war in Iraq. The only problem with that, Mr. Speaker, is, as George Orwell said, the quickest way to end a war is to lose it; and I believe the Democrat plan to micromanage our war in Iraq with benchmarks and deadlines for withdrawal is just that, a prescription for retreat and defeat.

But common sense and the Constitution teach us that Congress can declare war, we can fund or choose not to fund a war, but Congress should never attempt to conduct war. In fact, this is a broadly held view by some of the leading arteries of America's traditionally liberal media. The L.A. Times yesterday said: "Congress can cut funding for Iraq, but it shouldn't micromanage the war." In The Washington Post today, the lead editorial entitled "The Pelosi Plan For Iraq" said: "In short, the Democrat proposal is an attempt to impose detailed management on a war without regard to the war itself."

I commend these American newspapers for their sensible reasoning. Common sense and the Constitution demand Congress should reject the Pelosi plan.

CBO SAYS PRESIDENT'S BUDGET WILL NOT REACH BALANCE IN 2012

(Mr. SIREs asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office released a primary analysis of the President's fiscal 2008 budget and found that the administration would fall short of its claim of balancing the Federal budget by 2012 without raising taxes. This contradicts comments made by the President when he unveiled the budget last month and claimed that his budget will be balanced by 2012 without raising taxes.

According to the CBO report, the President's budget will run a \$9 billion deficit just 5 years from now. That report also concludes that the President's budget will lead to higher taxes for millions of middle-class Americans. First, his budget only includes a 1-year tax fix for the alternative minimum tax, which will lead to a \$247 billion tax increase on middle-class families over the next 5 years. Then the President's health care plan will result in a tax increase of \$500 billion over the next 10 years on middle-class families. This is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that the President levels with the American people about the budget that he proposed a month ago.

CONGRESSIONAL REPUBLICANS STILL WILLING TO PROVIDE PRESIDENT BUSH RUBBER STAMP ON WAR

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, at a time when the American people are demanding a change of direction in Iraq, congressional Republicans are more than willing to provide the President another blank check to continue the status quo.

After 4 years of incompetent planning and bad projections, it is time that Congress hold both the Iraqi Government and the Bush administration accountable. And yet Republican leaders continue to say we should just give the President what he wants, no questions asked. That is what the old Republican-controlled Congress did six times.

Later this month, the House is going to have a choice: give the President another blank check to move ahead with the status quo in Iraq, or take the war in a new direction. The U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans Health and Accountability Act is that new direction. Far from being micromanagement, as many Republicans call it, this legislation sets policy for equipping our troops, policy for refocusing the war on terror, and policy for a responsible redeployment.

I urge all of my colleagues to seriously consider this change in direction.

CONGRESS CANNOT AFFORD TO GIVE THE PRESIDENT ANOTHER BLANK CHECK ON IRAQ

(Mr. ARCURI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, after 4 years, billions of dollars and thousands of lives lost, we simply cannot reward failure with a blank check in the war in Iraq. I refuse to rubber-stamp more failed policies.

In the weeks ahead, we have the opportunity as representatives of the people to change the direction in Iraq without jeopardizing the safety and well-being of our troops. We must finally require Iraqis to take control of their own country and their own destiny.

The President has threatened to veto legislation that contains his own benchmarks for success in Iraq; provides our troops with the training and equipment they need; and ensures that when our brave soldiers return home, they get the kind of care that they deserve. Our legislation also commits additional funds to fight the forgotten war in Afghanistan and against al Qaeda, strengthening our national security.

Mr. Speaker, the people of New York's 24th District sent me here to address the war in Iraq and to start this country on a long overdue new direction for America.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Alabama). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

REAUTHORIZING UNITED STATES ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1003) to amend the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 to reauthorize the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1003

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REAUTHORIZATION OF UNITED STATES ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PUBLIC DIPLOMACY.

Section 1334 of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6553) is amended by striking "October 1, 2006" and inserting "October 1, 2009".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill and urge my colleagues to do so as well.

This legislation extends the mandate of an important bipartisan panel created by Congress, appointed by the President and working on behalf of the American people. This group keeps a watchful eye on major efforts by the private sector and the U.S. Government to inform and to influence opinions overseas and to improve America's understanding of other lands.

Since September 11, 2001, such efforts, known collectively as "public diplomacy," have been recognized as an integral part of our country's work to foster better relations with people abroad. Congress created the predecessor of this panel more than half a century ago. Now it is called the United States Advisory Commission on